

Finally...

David Flatt

Today marks my last official Sunday as the preacher of the Fry Road church of Christ. It is hard to know just what to say on a day like today. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Working with this church has been an honor. As Elizabeth and I were considering relocating in 2019, we had no intention of moving to Texas. Then, a door of opportunity opened for us. The rest is history.

The last six years have been eventful to say the least. The dynamics of a local church are always changing. We have had ups and downs. But we have done our best to meet challenges and encourage one another. I am deeply grateful for the love and support everyone has given to me and my family. We have made friendships that will last a lifetime.

For most of us, parting words are hard to find. So, I will borrow someone else's. The apostle Paul offered final exhortations in his letters. The following "Finally" passages convey thoughts I want to leave you with today.

Parting Words

1). Ephesians 6:10: "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might."

As Christians, we must be strong. We must increase our faith and keep sharp to the ways of evil. Thankfully, we do not have to find strength in ourselves. Paul shows us that our strength is found in Christ.

There are times when we are weak and defeated. Some days can be very difficult. We need to be reminded of the power of the Gospel. The dying and rising of Jesus shows us how the darker sides of life do not have the final word over us.

2). Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

The apostle Paul had planted the Gospel in the hearts of Jews and pagans in the Roman colony of Philippi. Those seeds had begun to grow and bloom. Through their faith, the town of Philippi was transforming. Rather than cultivating the values of the Roman Empire, these saints were spreading the values of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Wherever we find ourselves, we are to promote the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. This is our purpose as citizens of Heaven. We are on Earth colonizing the kingdom. This was Paul's point when he wrote, "Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20). Until the King arrives, we are to be busy promoting

truth, honor, justice, purity, and love. These are the traits of the King. These are the traits that change the world.

3). 2 Corinthians 13:11: “Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.”

In the life of any church, there are times when relationships can become strained. This can happen due to sin, varying degrees of maturity, and personality differences. Regardless of the situation, we must seek unity.

Christians need one another. Difficulties in relationships can be overcome through a common love for God. We can rejoice in what He has done for us through Jesus. His death is our path to restoration with God and one another. Being with like-minded people is a tremendous comfort. Knowing we have other saints who love us enables us to face life.

Conclusion

We must remain focused on WHO matters the most. Christ. We must encourage one another to remain committed to Him, His Church, and His mission.

The parting words of Paul to the elders in Ephesus are fitting to remember. As he left them, he said, “And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

Press on.